

K. Hervey

T H E

E A R L O F B R I S T O L ' S

S P E E C H,

T A K E N E X A C T L Y D O W N A S S P O K E N,

I N T H E

H O U S E O F L O R D S.

Die Veneris 23^o Aprilis, 1779.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. ALMON, OPPOSITE BURLINGTON-HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCLXXIX.

[Price One Shilling.]

EARL OF BRISTOL'S

S P E C I M E N

TAKEN EXACTLY FROM THE

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HOUSE OF LORDS

Dr. Smith's 1790

L O N D O N

PRINTED FOR J. ALMON, OPPOSITE DUNSTON HOUSE, HOLBORN.

MDCCLXXXIX

[The End of the World]

EARL OF BRISTOL'S SPEECH,

IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Die Veneris 23^o Aprilis, 1779.

MY LORDS,

I AM first to return your Lordships my thanks for the indulgence you have given me, in the putting off this motion, on account of my health, till now; I confess it has long been my wish to make it, as I think it a motion which on every consideration I am obliged to make, as a friend to this yet existing constitution, as a friend to His Majesty, as a friend to my country, and also as a member of this great council of the nation: and though, perhaps, in these polite and courtly days, this motion may be uncommon, yet, look in your Journals, your Lordships will find it is far from being unprecedented; and, therefore, I shall beg your Lordship's indulgence, whilst I state to you those various reasons that have induced me to make it; assuring your Lordships, that I have no other motive whatever for so doing, no consideration of any kind, than the welfare of my country, which I think essentially concerned in it; and I make no doubt but I shall fully prove it; it is high time for your Lordships to comply with such a motion.

My Lords, it is not my intention to trouble you with a long detail of professional anecdotes, or with the present state of the minutia of the navy; because the present situation of this country induces me (unless urged to the contrary) to leave a veil over whatever ought to be kept from the knowledge of the enemies of the state: I shall, therefore, confine myself to such recent observations, and to

such public notorious facts in the great lines of the conduct of that department, as appear to me, to have been the cause of the great decline of the navy, with regard to their want of ships, want of stores, want of petty officers, want of men, and want of discipline, when compared with what it was in former times, and within my memory.

My Lords, the unsuccessful attempts that were last year made by several noble Lords near me, for remedying that conduct which has brought the navy, and consequently the nation into this situation, gives me little hopes of better success now; since the same baneful influence prevails, and the same official ignorance, fallacy, and obstinacy, presides over that department, and which hitherto appears to have been supported against all argument, and even against all demonstration; yet my Lords, no consideration whatever shall prevent me doing my duty to my King and my Country; as I am quite indifferent as to the misconstructions, which the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty may throw out upon whatever I may say on this head to your Lordships, and knowing the purity of my intentions, am as totally indifferent to the misrepresentations that may be made of me elsewhere; relying on His Majesty's justice, goodness, and penetration, as I do upon that of your Lordships, to be no longer deceived by the arguments and assertions that have been hitherto made use of in defence of such conduct: My Lords, whilst I have breath, I will speak to your Lordships with the respect I owe you, but with that freedom also, that becomes one, who professes, and will prove himself on every occasion, a guardian to the people, and an independent man.

My Lords, your Lordships are already in possession from last year of all the grants that have been made by Parliament for the use of the navy, since the year 1771, which I think amounts to the enormous sum of £.24,181,838 17s. 2d. for the extra, wear and tear, and ordinary of the navy.

Your

Your Lordships are also in possession of the state of the navy at that period, and the state of it last year; therefore I shall not in this moment trouble your Lordships with a repeated detail of those; but I must intreat you to reflect how those immense supplies have or have not answered your expectations, with regard to keeping up and encreasing the Royal navy, as well as the filling all our magazines with all the different necessary stores, instead of suffering the too well known deficiency there has been of every kind.

The assertions thereupon that were last year held forth to your Lordships by the First Lord of the Admiralty, I am not much surprized at, encouraged as the noble Lord has been by the credulity, or the servility of numbers; which we may very well believe have often induced his Lordship to advance whatever would best answer the purpose of the moment; but how well those assertions have been verified, I leave for every man to judge, who is at all conversant in our present naval affairs.

My Lords, the First Lord of the Admiralty stated to your Lordships early last year, that he had then a fleet ready and superior to that of France, and that it would be soon equal to that of France and Spain, and added, in a loud and triumphant tone of voice, "That he thought a First Lord of the Admiralty, who had not always a fleet ready, superior to the united force of France and Spain, was not fit to be at the head of that department."

These were nearly his Lordship's words, and I most heartily concur with him in that doctrine; but I must beg leave to examine whether or not the noble Lord has proved his theory by his practice; and then I shall hope your Lordships will for once take the noble Lord at his word.

The ships that were stated to your Lordships the beginning of April, 1778, to be ready for sea, were then only thirty-five ships of the line, although it was well known that the armaments of France
and

and Spain had been a long time encreasing in all their ports; and that we had been fitting out ships ever since November, 1776.

My Lords, the accounts that were received by Government, so early as in January, 1778, of the fitting of the Toulon Squadron, and the progress of that Squadron, one would have imagined would have awakened the supineness of the Board of Admiralty, or, at least, that it would have prompted the First Lord of that Board (who I look upon in every light as the Marine Minister, and answerable as such) to have followed the maxims of all those great sea-officers, who had been his predecessors in that office, to have immediately sent ten or twelve ships of the line to Gibraltar; which would have effectually prevented the consequences, and defeated the intentions of that French armament; prevented that Squadron from passing through the Straights, or at least passing in such a manner as would have defeated their further pursuits; shewn protection and countenance to the garrisons of Gibraltar and Minorca; prevented the insult of blockading those ports; by a number of privateers and frigates, protected the English factories at the different ports there; protected your trade also in those seas, which I will venture to affirm no First Lord of the Admiralty, nor any Minister, ever dared to have so totally abandoned before; and would have prevented the disgraceful and ignominious figure you have made to all the different powers and states on each side of the Mediterranean sea, from the Straights of Gibraltar up to the coast of Syria.

My Lords, had they sent ten or twelve ships of the line in January, when by the accounts now given to your Lordships, and on the table, there were seventy ships of the line in commission, and I am certain there were not above twelve of the line then abroad in all the foreign services, and though we were told in April that it was impossible for you to detach; how to reconcile this I know not; but I know that had you then sent the ten or twelve ships I mentioned, there would have been no necessity afterwards of sending so
many

many ships as you were obliged to do at last, with Vice-Admiral Byron, to so distant a part as America; where it was well known, from all private intelligence, (supposing Government to have had none at all) that this Toulon squadron must have been bound. The embarking of Monsieur Gerard on board the Languedoc, the quantity and sort of cloathing that was put on board this squadron, with many other concurring indications, well known here, proved their destination almost to a certainty. And yet, after all the most tedious efforts to collect a force, after all their assertions, and after all the warnings given them, and that no detachments were made out of these seventy ships of the line *upon paper*, there were only thirty-one of the line that could be collected at Spithead for that very famous naval-review: and which I will venture to say, that had we been so fortunate as to have had a sea-officer at the head of the Admiralty, those ships would not, at that critical time, and in that situation, either have been collected for such a purpose, or rendezvoused at such a place, and where they were detained so long useless, for an object, that I am equally confident would never have been permitted, had the bad consequences arising from it to the many different services, that then claimed our attention, been properly and dutifully represented to his Majesty. But all that was so ably laid before your Lordships last year, by many noble Lords who now hear me, that I need not remind your Lordships of the detrimental folly of that measure: the great loss it was to your trade, and the exposing at that time all your settlements, were the consequences. But none were more dangerous than the detaining Vice-Admiral Byron so long before he was detached to America; that, my Lords, was more than folly; it was a capital crime: for since no ships were sent to the Mediterranean to stop the French squadron from passing those Streights, that officer ought to have been instantly sent away to join Lord Howe in the Delaware, or at New-York, when first they knew of Monsieur D'Estaing's sailing, and which they had sufficient time

for, as that Squadron had a most uncommon and extraordinary long passage, of above thirty days down the Mediterranean: for the securing, at all events, your fleet and army then in America, was surely the first, nay, indeed, the only object, and would have prevented the disasters Vice-Admiral Byron met with, by being ordered to Halifax; so far to the northward, and where if he had arrived, he would have had as long a passage to have encountered again from Halifax to New-York. But this delay of sending Vice-Admiral Byron's Squadron had nearly occasioned the loss of all Lord Howe's ships in the Delaware, (an escape of only three or four days) together with all the transports, victuallers, and storeships then attending the army; and which, probably, from their situation, and that of the enemy's army, would have occasioned the ruin of that under Sir Henry Clinton; which neither the vigilance or the bravery of either Lord Howe or Sir Henry Clinton could have foreseen or have prevented; and which army might, in that case, be now as totally forgot and abandoned as that unhappy brave set of men are who were lost at Saratoga.

And how were these ships of Vice Admiral Byron's fitted? My Lords, they were all drafted, and then fitted from the fleet destined for Admiral Keppel, and then under his command: that very fleet, which was then known to be the only safety of these kingdoms, and our only dependence; that very fleet which was to protect us from the trump'd-up report of an invasion; that blown up bubble (pardon the expression, my Lords) to draw the attention of the people from their more immediate misfortunes. Stores, and provisions of every kind that was wanted, was taken from that fleet to fit and equip Vice Admiral Byron's Squadron out; and I leave your Lordships to judge the situation our magazines were in, when I tell you, and assert it for truth, that the main-tacks of the Valiant, and other cordage reaved in that ship, and in the Ramillies (then under orders with Admiral Keppel) were unreav'd, and given to some of Vice
Admiral

Admiral Byron's ships, before he could sail; and who did not sail till the 9th of June, which was near two months after Monsieur D'Estaing had sailed from Toulon. At last Admiral Keppel was directed to sail the 13th of June, with the remaining twenty ships of the line under his command, and proceed off Brest, with, I believe, only two or three frigates at most, with assurances, that he was then equal to the Brest fleet, which must prove to your Lordships, that notwithstanding all the Secret Service money allowed and charged, that either the Admiralty had no true intelligence, or else, that they negligently, or wilfully exposed the British fleet to a far superior one of France, together with all the trade from the East and West-Indies, from the Mediterranean, and from all other parts, which was then hourly expected, and which, at that time, spread so universal an alarm through the whole kingdom, that there were scarce a merchant who did not expect a most severe blow to his capital; such was the notorious conduct of the Admiralty, such the skill of the First Lord director of it; and such the narrow escape these kingdoms had from such conduct; for, my Lords, Admiral Keppel no sooner arrived upon his station, but by intercepted intelligence, which he obtained from the French frigates, that Providence threw in his way; but which we must also be convinced, he was not instructed to make captures of, as he never has received approbation for having taken them; he found, by these frigates, that the French fleet consisted of thirty-two ships of the line at Brest, thirty of which were then in the road ready for sea, with many heavy frigates.

The judicious resolution immediately taken by that officer to return to England, and have his fleet re-inforced, equalled the manœuvre of the greatest Admirals; and, for aught I know, saved this country from a severe blow: for had the French fleet been out, and off Brest, when Admiral Keppel first appeared there, I know not what might have been the consequences; twenty ships of the line of ours, to thirty ships of the line of their's; they so primely manned,
and

and our ships, I will still say it, and aver it, so defective both of petty officers and good seamen, at a time that you had not twenty more ships to depend upon, nor could you have collected twenty more, let your paper accounts, here given in, be what they will; I will assert and prove it to be so; which must have left all your trade, all your coasts exposed, and perhaps these kingdoms at that moment, open to insults.

I repeat it, my Lords, there never was a more alarming instance of the blundering ignorance, or something worse, in the Admiralty Board, for sending this very inferior force out at that moment; nor ever was a more judicious, salutary step taken, than that which Admiral Keppel took, of immediately returning to be re-inforced: the Admiral (though unused to withdraw from an enemy, through a long series of successful and honourable services) was indifferent to what the disappointments of ignorant expectation might throw on him; he determined not to risk the fate of this country, than relying on that only fleet, and entrusted to his conduct, as well as his bravery, nor even risk the honour of its flag with such an unexpected, such a superior force. The consequences of that return was very different to himself from what he had reason to expect; instead of applause and testimonies of approbation for his conduct, the tools and scribblers of power were employed in every quarter of the town, to whisper and write away his exalted character, by throwing out everywhere, that he had seized that opportunity of an imaginary force to sacrifice the trade, and every thing else to his political revenge: the pensioned vehicles of infamy, detraction, and villainy, poured forth the dictates of their more infamous and profligate protectors and paymaster, not only by asserting that Admiral Keppel's return to port was in hopes of ruining the Ministry, but also by a constant abuse on all those whose experience, and whose judgement in naval matters, justified the Admiral's conduct, and who dared to withstand the extended rod of power by so doing; and these were the reports of the day,

day, these the grateful returns he then met with; and these the seeds that were then sown, and intended to produce his destruction hereafter; till they received such proofs of their own blundering ignorance, that they were obliged to be silent; and in the greatest consternation, the First Lord of the Admiralty forgot his usual ostentatious parade, and went down himself post, to St. Helen's, to court the Admiral's being silent, promising to exert every power, and to drain every other service, to enable Admiral Keppel to return to sea again, and face the enemy's fleet; although it was the 9th of July before only four ships could be got to join Admiral Keppel, though then at St. Helen's; at last, when arrived in his station, they got equal numbers to the French; and how did this fleet go out a second time, my Lords? A number of ships, it is true, with some of the very best and ablest officers in the service for their commanders, but manned from whatever, and wherever they could collect any thing, and with such a deficiency of petty officers, as every officer in the fleet, who is not awed by that all-powerful presider at the Admiralty Board, will not hesitate to acknowledge, was a great loss to us on the 27th and 28th of July; petty officers being the very life of a ship's company at all times, and much more so when in action; and yet I could never, in the last peace, whilst I sat at that Board, prevent the noble Lord from taking such steps, as turned that valuable class of men almost all out of the service, and discouraged all others from coming into it; and so much was this error felt, that I know for a certainty, they were so deficient, even in the flag-ships, that an Admiral on that command has since declared, that he was often obliged to do the duty of his Captain, his Captain of the Lieutenant, and the Lieutenant of Midshipman, for want of petty officers. The seventy-four gun ships were all deficient fifty seamen each ship, of their war complement, which, from a mature deliberation, and earnest recommendation of the greatest sea-officers in the last war, (Lord Anson, Lord Hawke, Admiral Boscawen, Admiral Pocock,

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and

and many others; and when I name Admiral Pocock, give me leave to observe, my Lords, that I wonder the loss of such an officer as he was to the service did not make them more cautious how they disobliged other great officers). I say, from their recommendation this was established, by order of Council; and which deficiency was severely felt in the last engagement, as I know from several of the very best officers I have conversed with on the subject; and which the size of our present 74 gun ships will not admit of such a reduction of their last war's complement.

My Lords, I shall make no other observation to your Lordships upon Admiral Keppel's return to sea after having been fitted at Plymouth, since the action of July, than, this fleet, for want of stores, &c. was, to the astonishment of the whole world, not able to get to sea again for many days after it was known the French fleet had been sailed again from Brest, and then returned with fished masts and yards, for want of others being in store.

My Lords, I have already told your Lordships why I will not enter into a discussion of the reasons which prevented, for many weeks after Admiral Keppel's last return to port, the getting out only ten or twelve ships of the line, which were intended to have sailed with Sir John Lockhart Ross, until at length westerly winds sat in, and blocked up all your ships and all your trade, whilst only two ships of the line and one frigate were then cruising in the bay. Was there ever a situation so baneful to the trade, so disgraceful and so destructive to the country? Look, my Lords, back to that period; though we had then been so long at open hostilities with France, and threatened by Spain, had you at that moment, or have you even now, any squadron, or any thing but a poor old sixty gun ship, with two or three frigates in the Mediterranean, with a Vice-Admiral's flag, creeping about from port to port, whilst the French were over-running those seas with a squadron of seven ships of the line and four frigates, under the Chevalier de Fabre's command?

Your

Your Leeward Islands were till last February left in as bad a condition ; only two ships of the line with Rear-Admiral Barrington ; to which, and the absurd instructions given to that officer at that time, you owe the loss of that valuable Island of Dominica, as you do the safety of the others to his good judgment, in having broke his orders at last to defend them, as you may see by a letter I have in my hand from Antigua.

Jamaica was left till now with only one ship of the line, and in the greatest distress.

The East-Indies, where one should have imagined the noble Lord, from his lately acquired lucrative connections with the Directors of that Company, would have taken earlier and better care of them, they had only two ships of the line till this moment ; and though the Company, from its powerful situation by land, has made an acquisition there, yet what merit in that acquisition has our Admiralty.

My Lords, in the last war, you had victorious squadrons in every quarter of the globe ; you had cruizers well appointed, and judiciously stationed in every place for the protection of your own trade, and for the annoyance of that of your enemies, and a most powerful fleet besides to protect your own coasts, and insult the ports of your enemies, from whence they scarce ever dared to venture.

Does this situation tally with the account given in upon paper, of the ships in commission ? My Lords, if there are such numbers in commission, and not fit for employment, more shame for those who commissioned them ; it is job-work, it is borough-work, it is to serve the purpose of venality, and it is to deceive your Lordships in your enquiries : but, my Lords, let what will be the fate of this enquiry here, the prying world, the people of England will not be so deceived ; and I hope they will know I have done my duty by them.

Does this situation prove the assertions of the First Lord of the Admiralty, with regard to his pompous and often boasted state of our navy, when he told your Lordships also, that he had more ships
ready

ready for sea than in the most flourishing year of last war, that of 1759? My Lords, look at their own accounts of what ships were employed in 1759; even these tell you there were 114 ships of the line, December, 1759, and in all 303, with frigates, &c. but, my Lords, by a much more accurate account I have in my hand, which was made out with all the circumspection and exactness possible; for as able, exact, and as great an accountant as ever sat at that Board, or the Treasury, and as great a man, no one can doubt of my meaning Mr. Grenville when I so describe that late valuable man---there were at that period 158 ships of the line, and 234 frigates, 120 of the first and 164 of the latter were then actually employed at sea. My Lords, I shall not run into any unnecessary detail, but I could tell your Lordships the exact number of ships and frigates that you had, and all those that were employed for each year since the Revolution, with every minute charge of every different branch relative to the civil or military departments of the navy, with their different number of men granted and employed each year in all the different branches; and, my Lords, were I to run through it, it would surprize and alarm your Lordships to see the increase of naval expence within these few years, and the decrease of your numbers, as well as your naval reputation, since the year 1771.

But, my Lords, what are all those arguments of the noble Lord's to us? If in saying, that he has as many ships as in former times, that this is all he has to plead in his justification, he must pardon me, if I say, it has nothing to do with our present situation; for if for many years past, and during that noble Lord's presiding at that Board of Admiralty, and taking upon himself, as I know he does in effect, the sole powers and directions, as if Lord High Admiral himself, that his Lordship has known, what we all know, and what we now prove to be true, that the fleets of France and Spain have been daily augmenting, what signifies what our fleets formerly were; why has not his Lordship augmented ours also? It has not been from want of
money

money or power; the noble Lord has repeatedly told us so himself; and we know that he has had of both, far exceeding any of his predecessors in the last war, ; far exceeding even what the Duke of York had, when Lord High Admiral of England, and when all the sluices of the Treasury were open to his commands, and almost all the royal power of his brother deputed to him for that purpose. How that power has been misused, or how that money has been misapplied, the public have a right to enquire into, and to be made acquainted with; and I hope your Lordships will not prevent the means of doing it, by leaving the power in the hands of him, who, whilst he has it, will use it to defeat your enquiries.

My Lords, 'tis something past my comprehension, and has something more than the appearance of neglect (wherever that lays). What is become of the navy, or what is become of the money granted for it?

It is a plain question; the people of England expect an explicit answer!

My Lords, I stated to your Lordships the last year, and it is on your table, that when that excellent officer, that great and good man, Sir Edward Hawke (now Lord Hawke) left the Admiralty Board, the latter end of 1770, or beginning of 1771, he left on the Navy List, which I have in my hand,

139 ships of the line

81 then fit for service

12 repairing

14 building

32 in a doubtful state

Makes 139, besides seven foreign ships purchased.

What ships have since been broke up, or what ships have been since built, either in the King's or the merchants yards, I will not ascertain,

E

ascertain,

ascertain, though I have a pretty authentic account in my hand of every thing relative to the navy, because your Lordships thought proper to refuse me the necessary and official informations which I requested; but as I suppose your Lordships to have refused those papers from considerations of state, I will not say more; but, my Lords, this I know and will say, that the sum of £.24,181,838 17s. 2d. has been granted for naval purposes since the year 1771.

Where then is the produce, where the effects of such immense, such extraordinary, unprecedented sums?

The fleet might have been, at least, one half augmented, from only a due proportion of that money having been properly applied to the repairing and building of the Royal navy: instead of which, the navy of England is now so considerably reduced, that on the 26th day of October last, when Admiral Keppel returned to port, which being a remarkable period, and one that it was natural to imagine all our utmost efforts had been exerted, and therefore I state our numbers at that time; after having been, as I said before, so long at open hostilities with France, and expecting every day to be so with Spain.

The fleet for service stood then only thus:

The ships under Admiral Keppel's or-			
ders were	-	-	33 of the line.
Returned from America were	-	-	4
At Spithead for different services and fitting	-	-	7--3 of which unfit for sea.
Portsmouth harbour (a first rate)	-	-	1 fitting.
Plymouth (ditto)	-	-	1 ditto.
Chatham	-	-	3 ditto to receive men.
The river	-	-	1
Mediterranean	-	-	1
Jamaica	-	-	1
Carry over			52

Leeward

	Brought over	52
Leeward Islands	- - -	2
East-Indies	- - -	2
St. Helena	- - -	1
North America, in all	- - -	17
	Total	74

9 of which were not manned,
and only coming forward,

therefore only 65 of these were employed,
and many of them already complaining.

Yet, my Lords, by the accounts given in on the table, in that very month of October, 1778, they pretend to tell you, they had 91 ships of the line in commission---Where were they? when only 65 were employed at home and abroad at so critical a moment, and when they acknowledge that your whole force was required? My Lords, it is fiction, it is fallacy, and it is delusion!

My Lords, all this is a matter that I should think would stagger and alarm all your former confidence; it does mine; and, I vow to God, I speak only for the good of my country, and from no other motive do I appeal to your consciences. But let us for a moment examine this pretty list of their's.

In the month of March they tell us there
were in commission - - - 74 ships of the line.

My Lords, the fleet under Admiral
Keppel orders then were - - - 31
With Lord Howe were - - - 6 which they had no reason
to expect were collected.

At Jamaica	- - -	1
East-Indies	- - -	2
Leeward Islands	- - -	2
Mediterranean	- - -	1
		43

What

What then became of the other 31, that we could not then detach to the Mediterranean; that we could not send to reinforce Lord Howe; that we could not reinforce Jamaica, nor the Leeward Islands, nor the East-Indies, nor have a cruising squadron to protect our coasts from the privateers?

My Lords, in the month of May there are said to be 78 in commission of the line, besides fifth rates, yet Admiral Keppel was sent out against 32 of the French with only 20 of the line of ours. Vice-Admiral Byron failed with - - 13 to America.

Lord Howe remained with his - - 6

Jamaica remained with - - 1

Leeward Islands with - - 2

East-Indies with - - 2

And the forlorn Mediterranean still with 1

In all 45

Where then were the remaining - - 33 that neither Admiral Keppel could have more against the French superior force, the Mediterranean any, or that in all this time you could have any cruizers, nor your islands be reinforced?

How stood the numbers in August, my Lords, when Admiral Keppel having been reinforced in June, and had had his action, returned to sea from Plymouth to look for the French fleet again, and who had got to sea with their fleet ten days before ours?

The list given in, tells us, there were then eighty-eight ships of the line in commission.

Yet Admiral Keppel returned with his same 30 crippled as they were.

Vice Admiral Byron was gone with his - 13

Vice Admiral Lord Howe remained as before

with his - - 6

Jamaica continued with - - 1

Carry over 50

Leeward

	Brought over	50
Leeward Islands with	- - -	2
East Indies with	- - -	2
The Mediterranean with	- - -	1

No cruizers, and therefore in all - 55

What then becomes of the remaining thirty-three, in all these months, that none could yet be detached to re-inforce, to relieve, nor to cruize; nor were there on October the 26th, when Admiral Keppel returned to Portsmouth, ten sail of the line ready to put to sea, though (as I said before) they wanted that number to go with Sir John Lockhart Ross, to cruize at that time, and who was to have been sent out chiefly with ships composed of those returned with Admiral Keppel; but, however, they were so long a collecting and getting refitted, that westerly winds set in, none could go out; and yet, my Lords, according to these very authentic lists, you had still thirty-three ships of the line in port to spare, and none coming out yet: I believe there never was, at any time that we have been at war, such strange management of the navy, nor can I well account for the absurdity of it, unless the noble Lord has withdrawn all his confidence from the best, and almost only official assistance he has there, I mean from the Secretary; the most diligent, most intelligent, and indefatigable man in business I ever knew; and from whose absence, or sickness, I am not at all surprized at any thing that may happen to go wrong in that department.

And now, my Lords, having gone through the numbers and state of our own fleet, give me leave to state the account of the French fleet, as by the best intelligence acquired by captures, and other information, can be procured.

Under Monsieur D'Orvillier's command, at the time of the action off Ushant, the 27th of July, were - 32 sail of the line.

Carry over 32

F

Left

Brought over	32
Left at Brest, fitting and repairing	- 13
Monf. D'Estaing's fleet from Toulon, in all	13
M. De Fabrè's squadron in the Mediterranean	7
There were building at Toulon, with all speed, and fitting	- - - 11
At Rochfort were fitting	- - - 5 of fifty-four guns.
In all	<u>81</u> of the line.

Of these 81, there were 69 of the line fit for sea. My Lords, I have all the different lists in my hand, if any Lord pleases to examine them; and I wish any would, to shew the noble Lord what my intelligence is; though I know it does not much differ from that which his Lordship has had, however ill requited the poor man has been who at every risk gave it; but as the noble Lord understands me, I shall not give the least distant hint of whom I mean to any other.

Let us now look over the list of the Spanish fleet; the names of which, and number of guns, I have in my hand:

Ships of 112 guns	- - 1
of 80 guns	- - 10
Ships from 70, 68, 64, and 62	45
of 58 and 56	- - 3

59 besides 30 frigates

and innumerable other vessels, as galleys, xebèques, barks, &c.

Let us now compare these three great naval powers:

Here are of France	- 81
of Spain	- - 59

Total 140 of the House of Bourbon.

England had in October last 65 employed
9 fitting

Total 74 fitting and coming on for service.

I should

I should be glad to know how the navy of England came to be thus reduced in ships fit for service since 1771, with such immense sums of money granted for its support, and its increase; and how it came to be so inferior to that of the forces of France and Spain; and I wish to know how the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty, will, therefore, account for his not having had *a fleet ready and equal to the united force of France and Spain*, as he has often boasted he ought at all times to have had.

My Lords, here is in my hand an authentic list of the Royal navy, delivered to me when I first went to the Admiralty Board, in 1771. I believe this cannot be disputed; I only desire to read, as part of my speech, the very short abstract of the ships of the line, &c.

Here are 139 ships of the line,
Besides - - - 13 fifty gun ships, which the noble Lord
says are never of the line,
And - - - 230 frigates.

In all - - - 382

Now, is there a Lord in this House, is there a man in this kingdom, but must feel indignation at such a reduction of the navy at this time, and with such sums as have been given for it; and at the same time to hear such fallacious accounts as have been repeatedly given to your Lordships by the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty?

£. s. d.

My Lords, looking into the grants made by Parliament for the services of the navy, between the years 1751 and 1759, I find granted in that time for naval purposes - - - 19,403,663 1 1½

Out of which was to pay towards discharging the navy debt, and money given for building and repairing the different hospitals of Greenwich, Haslar, Plymouth, &c. - - - 2,139,696 9 0

There remained of those grants for naval services of extra, wear and tear, and ordinaries - 17,263,966 12 1½

Therefore

Therefore you will find, that although we had been above four years at war between 1751 and 1759, with France, and that between 1771 and 1779 we have had - - - 24,181,838 17 2

And though we have only been at open hostilities since last July, yet there is an increase of the grants to the navy in these last seven years of 6,917,872 5 0 4

A sum of itself sufficient to have doubled the navy of England, with all its appurtenances.

My Lords, I should be ashamed after such public facts, such undeniable truths as I have now laid before your Lordships, to take up more of your time, or to think you could require a word more on this subject, or that it was necessary for me to enter into a more minute discussion of the present particular situation of every branch of the naval department, which, if I attempted, I should be again reproached with having held forth to the world, what ought to be concealed from the enemies of the State; and which, indeed, I have no great occasion to do, when your Lordships reflect on the noble Lord's own declaration to the Court-Martial lately held on Admiral Keppel, as to the impropriety of shewing the private letters that passed between his Lordship and that Admiral, on the state of the ships that composed that fleet, which therefore, he said, made it improper to shew those letters. My Lords, if that was so, it could not be from its being a favourable report of the state of those ships; but I will say no more on that head, only leave your Lordships to judge from his own words of his own conduct; though, at the same time, give me leave to observe to your Lordships (as I have on a former occasion) that I never will allow that apprehensions of this nature are to influence this House, or to deter us from doing our duty here; for without pointing out the errors and misconduct of those who superintend the navy, or any other department of the State, we can never be of any service to his Majesty by advising, or to

to the country by enquiring; it will be impossible; they will give us no other papers or accounts than what they please, and we shall remain ever in the dark. My Lords, I, for one, will never submit to this; I care not who knows it; I wish more heard me than do; I speak as an independent man, and one solely attached to the interest and welfare of my fellow citizens, without any other view whatever.

But, my Lords, I have already told you, unless urged to it, I will say no more on this head, only earnestly request your Lordships, that you will not wait till the whole navy of England is ruined, by such a continuance of misconduct; till the trade of these kingdoms is all annihilated, and till you have lost all your colonies, before you do justice to the people for the injuries they have received, and are daily receiving; and which I make no doubt, but your Lordships may at once prevent, by a dutiful and proper address to our most gracious Sovereign, to remove one of the principal authors of this misconduct, from a place of such trust and consequence as he now holds.

My Lords, I need not tell your Lordships, that there are various parliamentary methods of removing any Minister, and which all but one tend to punish as well as remove: a bill of impeachment, a bill of attainder, bill of pain and penalties; all these tend to punish as well as remove; and that of addressing the King to remove from His Majesty's Councils and presence for ever, tends only to remove the evil, without inflicting any real punishment on the offender; and yet, my Lords, I have chosen a still much milder method than any of those; and therefore I do not doubt but I shall have the concurrence of every one of your Lordships, who have, for so long a time past, been condemning the measures that have so notoriously brought the navy, and consequently the nation into this deplorable and disgraceful situation; nor doubting, that many Lords who have formerly joined in approving those measures, from being now convinced of their pernicious ten-

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dencies,

dencies, and how much they have been deceived by the misrepresentation of artful men, that they will condemn those very measures they were formerly seduced to approve: and of all others, they, my Lords have the greatest reason to concur in my motion for addressing the King to remove a Minister from an office, who has proved himself so incapable of holding that office with any credit to his King and country.

And therefore, my Lords, I shall move "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to remove the Right Honourable John Earl of Sandwich, First Commissioner for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, &c. and one of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, from the said office of the First Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty."

F I N I S.

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